

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 10

Kateryna Stepanenko, George Barros, Riley Bailey, Angela Howard, and Frederick W. Kagan

October 10, 9:30 pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Russian forces conducted a massive missile strike attack against over 20 cities, including Kyiv, on October 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched over 84 cruise missiles and 24 drone attacks, 13 of which were carried out with Iranian-made Shahed-136 drones.^[1] Ukrainian air defense shot down 43 cruise missiles, 10 Shahed-136 drones, and 3 unspecified drones. Russian forces launched missiles from 10 strategic bombers operating in the Caspian Sea and from Nizhny Novgorod, Iskander short-range ballistic missile systems, and 6 missile carriers in the Black Sea.^[2] Russian forces launched the Shahed-136 drones from Crimea and Belarus.^[3] Ukrainian media reported that Russian missile strikes hit 70 targets, including 29 critical infrastructure facilities, 4 high-rise buildings, 35 residential buildings, and a school.^[4]

Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed to have ordered the missile strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure in retaliation for a “terrorist act” at the Kerch Strait Bridge, likely in part to curry favor with the Russian pro-war nationalist camp that has been demanding such retaliation.^[5] Putin accused Ukraine during his meeting with the Russian Security Council of conducting terrorist acts against Russian civilian and critical infrastructure, namely against the Kerch Strait Bridge, the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), and segments of the Turkish Stream gas transmission system.^[6] Ukrainian officials have not formally taken responsibility for the explosion at the Kerch Strait Bridge.^[7] The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) also reported that Putin has been planning this attack prior to the Kerch Strait Bridge explosion, and if true, could indicate that Putin planned this attack for the deflection of the Kharkiv-Izyum-Lyman failures.^[8]

Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu also attended the meeting despite speculations that Putin would force him to resign, which may suggest that Putin settled on responding to only one of the pro-war community's demands at this time.

Putin emphasized that he would conduct proportional escalation in any future retaliatory actions. He stated that if Ukraine continues to carry out “terrorist attacks against [Russian] territory, then Russian responses will be harsh, and their scale will correspond to the level of the threat to the Russian Federation.” This declaration of proportionality suggests that Putin intends to continue climbing the escalation ladder rung by rung and cautiously rather than jumping to more dramatic measures such as the use of nuclear weapons. Putin may also mean to message the Russian pro-war camp that they should manage their expectations of an ongoing daily bombardment of Ukraine similar to the one conducted today.^[9] Russian milbloggers, for their part, have overwhelmingly welcomed the strikes and amplified Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev's statement that more attacks against Ukraine will follow soon.^[10] Ukrainian and Western intelligence have previously reported that Russia has spent a significant portion of its high-precision missiles, and Putin likely knows better than Medvedev or the milbloggers that he cannot sustain attacks of this intensity for very long.^[11]

The October 10 Russian attacks wasted some of Russia's dwindling precision weapons against civilian targets, as opposed to militarily significant targets. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces successfully completed the mission of striking Ukrainian military command centers, signal infrastructure, and energy systems in Ukraine.^[12] Social media shows that Russians instead hit a children's playground, a park, a German consulate, and a business center among other non-military targets.^[13] Ukrainian air defenses also shot down half of the Russian drones and cruise missiles. Russian attacks on the Ukrainian energy grid will not likely break Ukraine's will to fight, but Russia's use of its limited supply of precision weapons in this role may deprive Putin of options to disrupt ongoing Ukrainian counter-offensives in Kherson and Luhansk Oblasts.

Russian and Belarusian forces remain unlikely to attack Ukraine from the north despite Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's October 10 announcement that Belarus and Russia agreed to deploy the Union State's Regional Grouping of Forces (RGV) —a strategic formation of Russian and Belarusian units tasked with defending the Union State.

Lukashenko stated that he and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed on October 7 on an unspecified “deployment” of the Russian-Belarusian RGV in “connection with the escalation on the western borders of the Union State” but did not clearly define the deployment’s parameters.

[14] Lukashenko stated that over a thousand Russian personnel will deploy to Belarus and that a Russian-Belarusian group began forming on October 8.[15] The Russian component of any RGV formations in Belarus will likely be comprised of low-readiness mobilized men or conscripts who likely will not pose a significant conventional military threat to Ukraine.

The Russian component of the RGV is comprised of elements of the 1st Guard Tank Army, 20th Combined Arms Army, and airborne units— formations that have all sustained heavy combat losses in Ukraine and have a severely reduced combat capacity.[16] A *Kyiv Post* reporter claimed that Russian soldiers are deploying to Belarus en masse via cattle railcars without mechanized equipment on October 10—a characterization consistent with ISW’s assessment.[17] ISW has previously assessed that Ukrainian reports from late September of Belarus preparing to accept 20,000 mobilized Russian men indicate that Russia hopes to use Belarusian military facilities and infrastructure to hold and potentially train newly mobilized Russian forces, but that it remains exceedingly unlikely that these are leading indicators of imminent Belarusian involvement in Ukraine on Russia’s behalf.[18] The Kremlin may seek to use additional Russian forces in Belarus to fix Ukrainian forces near Kyiv and prevent their redeployment elsewhere to participate in counter-offensives. ISW has previously assessed that Lukashenko cannot afford the domestic ramifications of Belarusian involvement in Ukraine.[19] ISW also assesses that Russia does not have the ability to form a ground strike force from scratch or from existing units in Belarus quickly. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that it has not observed indicators of Russian forces forming offensive groups in Belarus and explicitly stated “there is no threat of an attack from the territory of the Republic of Belarus as of October 10.”[20]

Key Takeaways

- **Russian forces conducted massive, coordinated missile strikes on over 20 Ukrainian cities.**
- **President Vladimir Putin claimed that the coordinated missile strikes were in retaliation for the explosion on the Kerch Strait Bridge, likely in part to curry favor with “pro-war” factions.**
- **Russian and Belarusian ground forces remain unlikely to attack Ukraine from Belarusian territory to the north.**
- **Ukrainian forces have likely liberated over 200 square kilometers of territory in western Luhansk Oblast as of October 10.**
- **Russian forces continued unsuccessful attempts to regain recently lost territory in northwest Kherson Oblast while reinforcing nearby positions with damaged and hastily mobilized units.**
- **Russian forces continued ground attacks in Donetsk Oblast.**
- **Russian and occupation administration officials are setting conditions to move up to 40,000 residents out of Kherson Oblast to Russian-occupied Crimea and the Russian Federation.**
- **Russian forces cannot supply mobilized forces, likely due to years of supply theft by contract soldiers and commanders.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 10, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because those activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

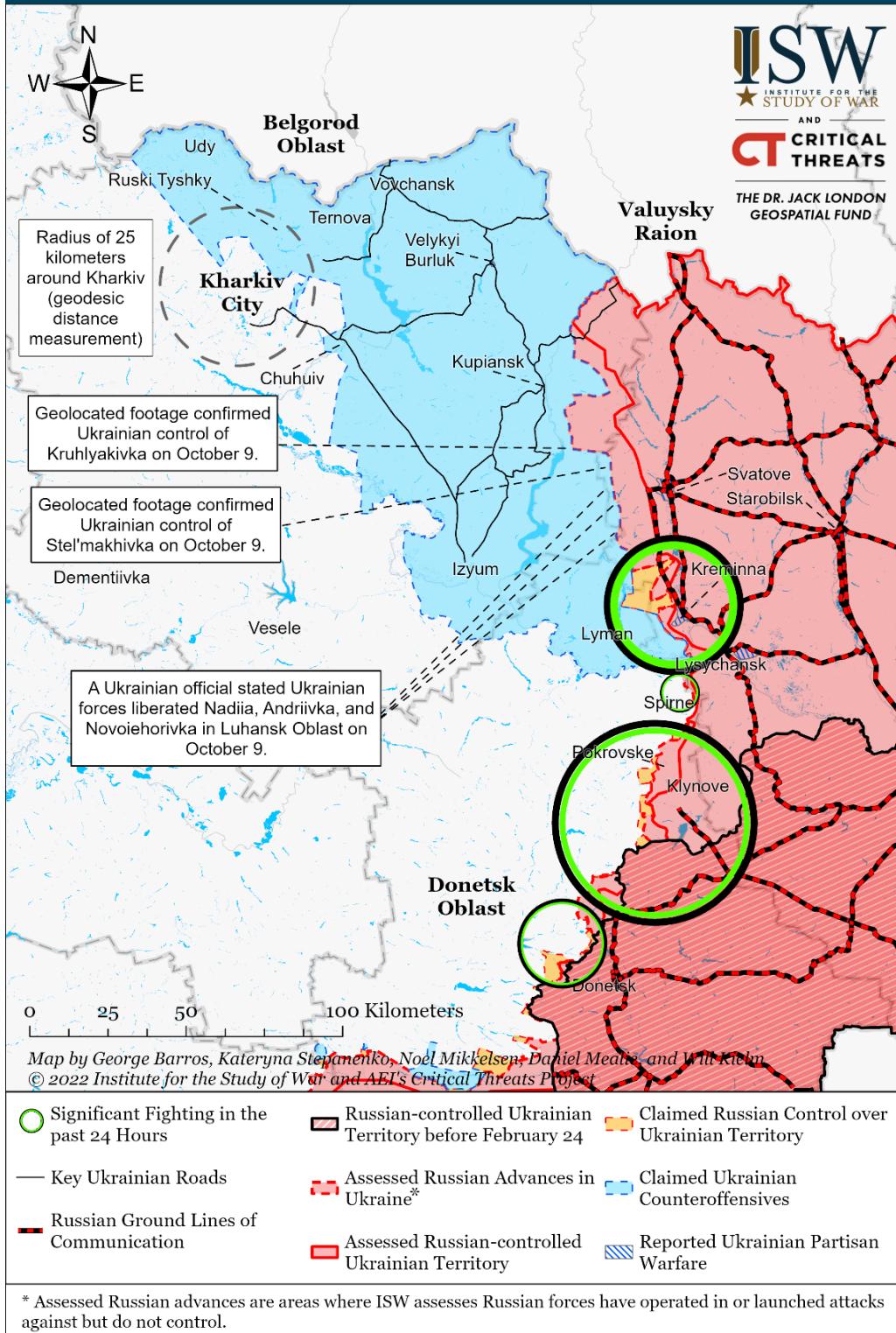
- Ukrainian Counter-offensives—Southern and Eastern Ukraine
- Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and two supporting efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort—Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

Ukrainian Counter-offensives (Ukrainian efforts to liberate Russian-occupied territories) Eastern Ukraine: (Oskil River-Kreminna Line)

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Luhansk Oblast east of the Oskil River in the direction of Svatove and Kreminna on October 9 and 10 and have likely liberated over 200 square kilometers of territory in western Luhansk Oblast as of October 10.^[21] Ukrainian forces captured Stel'makhivka (17 kilometers west of Svatove) on October 9, and Luhansk Oblast Administration Head Serhiy Haidai confirmed that Ukrainian forces liberated several settlements on the Oskil River-Kreminna Line including Novolyubivka, Nevske, Hrekiivka, Novoiehorivka, Nadiia, and Andriivka.^[22] Geolocated combat footage posted on October 9 shows Ukrainian forces destroying a Russian tank in Novoselivske 15 km northwest of Svatove on the Svatove–Kupyansk highway.^[23] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to ford the Zherebets River near Makiivka and Raihorodka (approximately 12 km southwest of Svatove) on October 10. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and recaptured Terny on October 10, though ISW cannot verify this claim.^[24] ISW's assessment of Ukrainian forces' front line places Ukrainian forces within 20 km of Svatove's western side.

Russian forces are likely preparing defenses in Starobilsk and Svatove in response to Ukraine's northern counter-offensive. A Russian milblogger reported that the Wagner Group deployed approximately 1,000 personnel to the Russian force grouping in Lysychansk to reinforce the Luhansk sector and establish a defensive line that will run from Lysychansk along the Seversky Donets River back to Russia's internationally recognized borders on October 9.^[25] Social media video reportedly shows Russian forces in Starobilsk forcing students to dig trenches on October 9.^[26] Haidai reported that Russian forces blew up railway and bridge crossings near Svatove, are laying mines, and continued to prepare defenses in the area on October 10.^[27]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of October 10, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



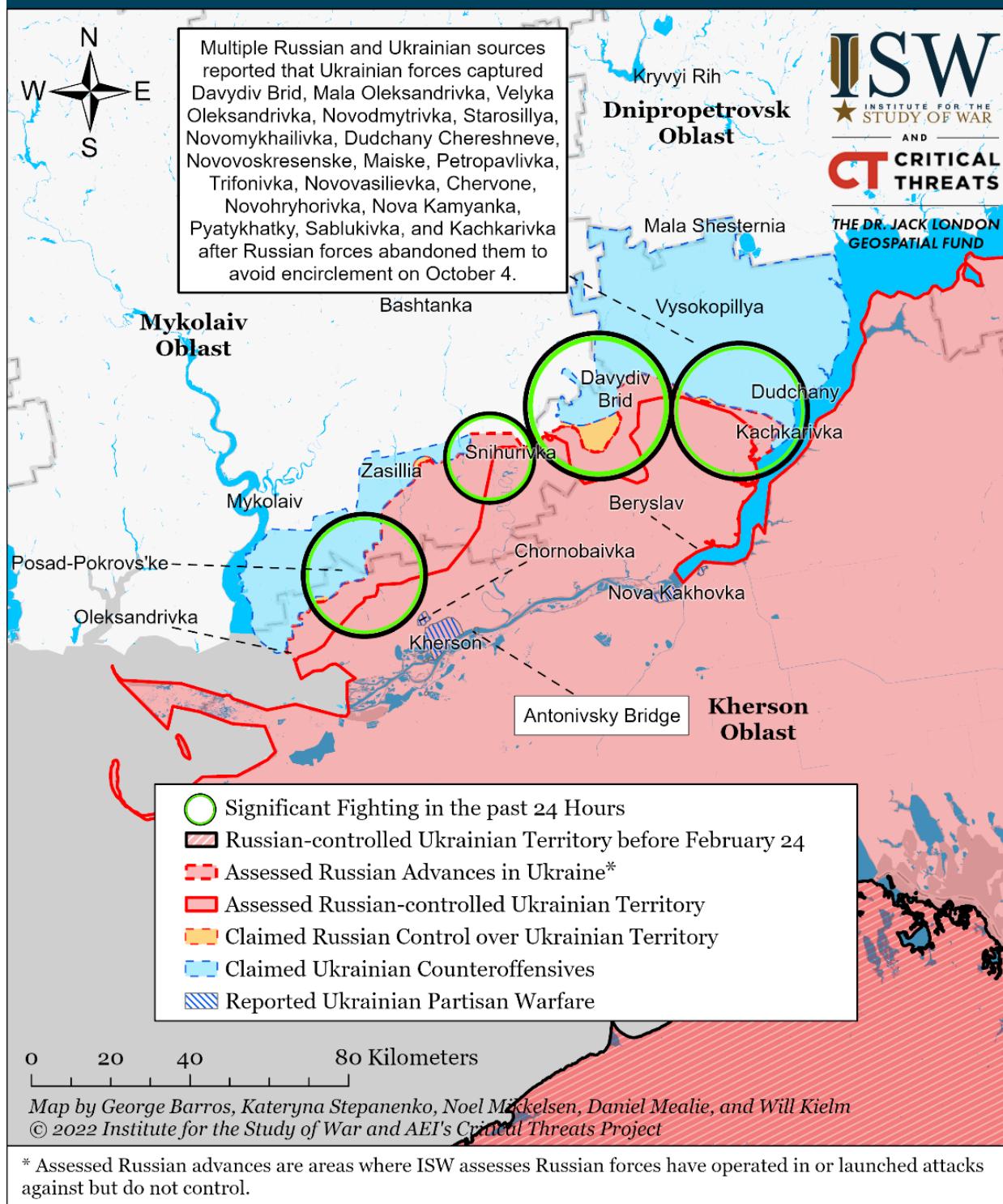
Southern Ukraine: (Kherson Oblast)

Russian forces continued their unsuccessful attempts to regain lost positions in northern and northwestern Kherson Oblast on October 9 and October 10. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated that Russian forces up to the size of a motorized rifle platoon unsuccessfully attempted to attack Ukrainian positions in the direction of Davydiv Brid on the eastern bank of the Inhulets River.^[28] Ukrainian military officials noted that Russian forces focused most of their airstrikes on Davydiv Brid and struck Ukrainian positions with kamikaze drones in Dudchany (on the western bank of Dnipro River) and other liberated settlements.^[29] Russian sources claimed that Davydiv Brid "is a grey zone" and stated that Russian forces are clearing the forest belt south of Davydiv Brid, however.^[30] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) also claimed repelling Ukrainian counter-offensives on settlements in the vicinity of Davydiv Brid.^[31] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces attempted to launch a counterattack on Ternovi Pody, approximately 33km northwest of Kherson City.^[32]

Russian forces are maintaining their efforts to reinforce positions with hastily mobilized and damaged units in northern Kherson Oblast. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces transferred an additional 200 servicemen and up to 300 units of military equipment to reinforce areas of Ukrainian counter-offensives, but these forces are likely not sufficient for Russian forces to regain lost positions in northern Kherson Oblast.^[33] Russian sources also reported that mobilized men from Volgograd Oblast and the Republic of Kalmykia arrived in Kherson Oblast.^[34] The Ukrainian General Staff claimed that a battalion tactical group (BTG) of the 150th Motorized Rifle Division that operates in the Kherson direction had over 520 servicemen killed in action, which would be more than half of the nominal complement of personnel in a motorized rifle BTG.^[35] The report noted that the BTG largely consists of mobilized men, which is likely considering that ISW has previously reported that 150th Motorized Rifle Division had suffered serious losses during the Battle of Mariupol.^[36] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the Donetsk People's Republic's (DNR) 127th Rifle Regiment of the 1st Army Corps has suffered critical losses after serving on the first line of combat in Kherson and Mykolaiv Oblasts, and that their families complained to Russian law enforcement about failures by the Russian military command to support them and about their poor living conditions.^[37] The Ukrainian General Staff noted that an unspecified commander of the Russian 49th Combined Arms Army formed the 127th Rifle Regiment without necessary preparation or proper equipment. ISW previously reported that this unit is composed of forcefully mobilized men and has previously refused to fight due to lack of such basic supplies as water in early September.^[38]

Ukrainian forces continued to conduct an interdiction campaign in Kherson Oblast on October 9 and October 10. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Ukrainian forces destroyed three ammunition warehouses in Kherson and Beryslav Raions, and one control point in Kakhovka Raion. Odesa Oblast Military Administration Spokesperson Serhiy Bratchuk also insinuated that Ukrainian forces destroyed a Russian warehouse with military equipment in Hola Prystan (about 14km southwest of Kherson City), and social media footage showed fire and smoke in the settlement on October 9.^[39]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 10, 2022, 3:00 PM ET

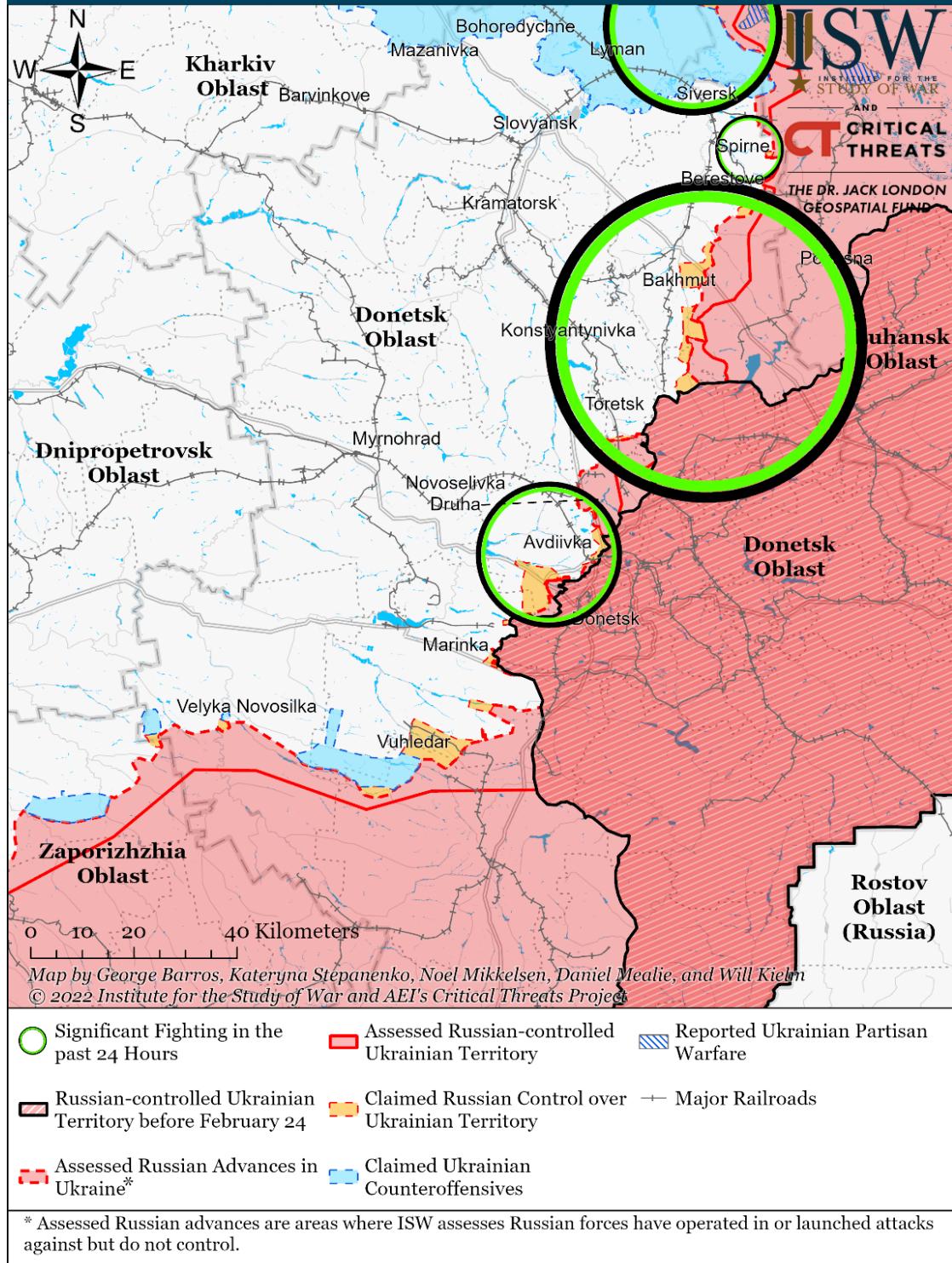


Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued to conduct ground assaults in Donetsk Oblast on October 9 and 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Bakhmut; north of Bakhmut near Bakhmutske and Soledar; and south of Bakhmut near Mayorsk, Ozaryanivka, Ivanhrad, and Niu York on October 9 and 10.^[40] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces fully occupied and cleared Zaitseve on October 9.^[41] A Russian milblogger also claimed that Russian forces entered the southern outskirts of Optyne and Ivanhrad on October 10, although ISW cannot independently verify his claims.^[42] Russian sources reported that fighting in and around Bakhmut is more intense than usual and that Ukrainian artillery attacks intensified to a level unseen since summer 2022.^[43] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks north of Avdiivka near Kamianka, and south of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske, Nevelske, Pobieda, and Optyne on October 9 and 10.^[44] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces launched assaults near Pisky and Marinka on October 9 and 10.^[45] The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to attack Russian positions near Oktyabirske, Neskuchene, and Yehorivka on October 9.^[46] Head of the Donetsk People's Republic Denis Pushilin stated on October 10 that Russian forces in the Vuhledar and Marinka directions are making progress, but not as quickly as commanders had hoped.^[47] Russian forces continued routine indirect fire along the line of contact in Donetsk Oblast on October 9 and 10.^[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 10, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



Supporting Effort—Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces continued routine artillery, air, and missile strikes west of Hulyaipole, and in Dnipropetrovsk and Mykolaiv Oblasts on October 9 and 10.^[49] Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces struck Zaporizhia City, Mykolaiv City, Ochakiv, and Nikopol.^[50] Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces conducted cruise missile strikes on Zaporizhzhia City on October 9, killing at least 12 civilians.^[51]

Ukrainian forces continued to strike Russian positions and destroy Russian drones in southern Ukraine on October 9 and 10. Ukrainian sources reported that Ukrainian air defense systems shot down Russian UAVs, including Shahed-136s, in Mykolaiv and Odesa Oblasts on October 9 and 10.^[52] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that Ukrainian forces struck Russian positions near Tokmak on October 8, 9 and 10, reportedly destroying a Russian manpower concentration, a railway connection, and infrastructure facilities.^[53] The Mayor of Melitopol Ivan Fedorov reported on October 10 that Russian forces are increasingly transporting military equipment through Zaporizhia Oblast following the October 8 explosion on the Kerch Strait Bridge.^[54] Russian columns of military equipment reportedly move from Mariupol through Berdyansk to Melitopol, a route more vulnerable to Ukrainian strikes than the supply line across the Kerch Strait Bridge.^[55]

Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Mobilization in Russia continues to face bureaucratic and logistical challenges. Russian court records suggest that years of corruption and petty theft of military supplies among Russian military personnel has rendered the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) unable to provide mobilized troops basic necessities such as protective equipment, weapons, medical, and personal supplies.^[56] The *BBC* reported on October 10 that Russian military garrisons have sentenced at least 558 men for clothing theft, and have made 12,000 fraud convictions and over 700 embezzlement convictions over the past eight years.^[57] Stolen equipment includes millions of rubles worth of goods ranging from bullet-proof vests, boots, and diesel fuel to soap, toilet paper, and socks.^[58] The data from these convictions likely represents a small subset of corruption in the Russian military. The governor of the Russian Mari El Republic acknowledged the Russian MoD's supply problems impacting mobilized troops, promised to fix the problems, and attributed the challenges to ignorance of the mobilized men's needs on October 9.^[59]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) continues to depend on proxy forces, mobilized, and contract soldiers finding ways to provide their own equipment. Russian authorities opened a mobilized-soldier support center collecting “humanitarian aid” at Novosibirsk State University on October 9.^[60] One Russian milblogger posted a link to crowdfunding for equipment for the Russian proxy 208th Cossack Regiment.^[61] A separate milblogger posted a crowdfunding link for Russian, Luhansk People's Republic, and Donetsk People's Republic forces on October 9.^[62] Two other milbloggers posted photos and videos of thermal sights and drones purchased with crowdfunding from channel subscribers on October 9.^[63]

Russian physical supply shortages extend beyond equipping Russian soldiers. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 9 that Russian leadership is negotiating with other countries for the procurement of further artillery shells, mortar shells, and components for rocket launcher systems. The Ukrainian General Staff reported Belarusian military warehouses and arsenals remain another source for resupply and that Belarusian authorities plan to send 13 trains with ammunition and other unspecified equipment from Belarus to Russia.^[64]

Russian citizens continue resisting mobilization in Russia. An unknown individual conducted an arson attack against a military recruitment office in Arkhangelskoe, Bashkortostan on October 9.^[65] One Russian milblogger posted on October 9 that North Ossetia has not fulfilled its quota for partial mobilization and has only mobilized 40% of the region's target.^[66] The milblogger stated that the mobilization delinquency situation is worst in Vladikavkaz, whose mayor vacations in Turkey.^[67] A Russian source reported that occupation Crimean State Council Chairman Vladimir Konstantinov announced plans to formally propose a federal law banning men on the military registration list from

fleeing Russia to avoid mobilization.^[68] Konstantinov suggested that Russia label those who have already fled as “under foreign influence” and prevent those convicted of discrediting the Russian army or evading service from voting or holding office for up to 10 years after the conviction’s expungement.^[69]

Russian-backed occupation authorities reportedly established sites in Severodonetsk to mobilize Ukrainians on October 9. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on October 9 that Russian forces are prioritizing mobilizing Ukrainians with experience but also seek to fill personnel shortages with untrained and improperly equipped conscripts.^[70]

Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of occupied and annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian civilians into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian and occupation administration officials continued to conduct filtration activities in the Russian-occupied territories on October 9 and 10. The Head of the Kherson Oblast occupation administration Vladimir Saldo announced that governors in Russian-occupied Crimea, Kransodar Krai, Stavropol Krai, and Rostov Oblast have agreed to take up to 10,000 people from Kherson Oblast.^[71] Saldo has framed the movement of Kherson Oblast residents as a “vacation” program for children and their parents.^[72] Odesa Oblast Military Administration Spokesperson Serhiy Bratchuk claimed that Russian and occupation administration officials may not plan to return the children and their parents to Kherson Oblast.^[73] The Mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, reported that occupation administration officials in Melitopol are transporting families from the city to the Russian Federation as well.^[74] Fedorov also reported that Russian and occupation administration officials continue to prevent residents from crossing the Vasylivka checkpoint into Ukrainian-held Zaporizhia Oblast and that the queue there is over 6,000 people long as of October 8.^[75]

Russian and occupation administration officials have failed to restore heating infrastructure ahead of the heating season in Russian-occupied territories as of October 10. The Zaporizhia Oblast Military Administration reported on October 10 that 269 settlements in Russian-occupied Zaporizhia and Donetsk Oblasts face gas supply disruptions.^[76] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian and occupation administration officials in Zaporizhia Oblast have left Melitopol and Berdyansk completely without heat despite promises to repair damaged pipelines.^[77] Haidai reported on October 9 that Russian and occupation administration officials are concerned about the winter in Lysychansk, Rubizhne, and Severodonetsk, where many residents still do not have access to heat.^[78] Haidai and the head of the Kharkiv Oblast Military administration, Oleg Synehubov, have warned their respective residents to leave settlements in both occupied and recently de-occupied territories that lack heating as it will likely be months before Ukrainian or occupation authorities can restore heating.^[79]

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidokHswmUywQUMXMt11Z4nLiELA1BbgjiBaf8U2GgVSrv9ZT6Cmfmnjb1GSgtT8FK771>

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[3] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido34WNoYsPX22Fd413PLchpSQFwRKVbkdFyn1arb1mgDE77bT6PRTLWSXNN64fXu41M1>

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<https://www.axios.com/2022/06/11/russia-limits-precision-missiles-ukraine-sanctions>

[12] https://t.me/mod_russia/20714

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[30] <https://t.me/rybar/39969>; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/177 ; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/178

[31] https://t.me/mod_russia/20714

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